



City Bloom

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Metamorphosis hits a "home run"

On May 5, 2000, the Conservancy held a Gala dinner-dance, Metamorphosis, which netted \$125,000 for the Conservancy's new home; the Urban Environmental and Ecological Center. Judy McLendon, of Summit, chaired the event which brought guests from around the state. Held at the Newark Club, the Gala honored Rick Cerone, owner of the Newark Bears, for his contributions to the City's renaissance.

In 1995, the Conservancy acquired the historic, but deteriorated, Oheb Shalom Synagogue on Prince Street in Newark's Central Ward from the City of Newark to create an Urban Environmental and Ecological Center. This "Center" was conceptualized as an "oasis for learning" for urban children.

Based on an idea to create a series of thematic gardens, the outdoor learning area of the Center was envisioned to host schoolchildren from Newark and other urban communities to engage in cross-curriculum classroom lessons utilizing the natural world as the fulcrum for learning. The Center would also allow the Conservancy's four programs to expand, increasing the numbers of teachers, students and families which we have served for over a decade through education, job training, community gardening and environmental justice.

Phase one of the project was completed with the exterior restoration, new windows and new roof for the Synagogue, stabilizing and preserving it from further deterioration. Since the completion of phase one, the Capital Campaign Committee has been diligently pursuing the funding necessary to complete the interior renovation and construct the Outdoor Learning Center.

Led by Judith Shipley and Marilyn Pfaltz of Summit, the Campaign to build the Conservancy's Urban Environmental and Ecological Center has been a true success story. As of December 1, 2000, our dedicated group of volunteers has raised nearly \$4.7 million to completely renovate the Synagogue and create the Outdoor Learning Center. Included within the current funder's list are many longtime friends of the Conservancy—Garden Clubs, Foundations, Corporations and the New Jersey Historic Trust and Garden State Open Space Preservation Trust Fund.

The next "phase" of the campaign will begin in Summer 2001 with the final restoration and construction of the building and preparation of the outdoor site. The design work is close to completion and soon will go to bid. A series of "hard hat" tours for donors and friends of the Conservancy will show our progress along the way.



Oheb Shalom Synagogue

A Salute to Victoria Foundation!

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Our heartiest congratulations to Victoria Foundation on its 75th Anniversary and to Catherine M. McFarland on her Tenth Anniversary as the Foundation's Executive Officer! The Foundation has been a major, long-time supporter of Newark and its renaissance and has been a vital contributor to the Conservancy. We offer our most sincere gratitude for the Foundation's ongoing support of our organization and for the unfailing commitment to Newark's rebirth!

Over the past 12 years Victoria Foundation has provided 16 grants to the Conservancy, totaling \$741,750. These grants have been critical to our ability to fulfill our mission. Among these grants, \$325,000 has been for our Campaign to create our Urban Environmental and Ecological Center in downtown Newark. Our most recent grants, received last June, are \$75,000 for our Education Program and \$100,000 for the Center.

Founded in 1924, Victoria Foundation currently focuses on educational, urban development, and youth and family initiatives, predominantly in Newark, as well as environmental issues throughout New Jersey. The Foundation's efforts to improve conditions in Newark began in the early 1960s, seeking to create access to and opportunities for the people of the City.

In 1964 the Foundation launched an educational pilot program for pre-Kindergarten and elementary grades at Newark's Cleveland School, representing one of the earliest programs of its type in the country. Victoria Foundation was the first to offer enrichment programs, teacher training workshops, all day Kindergarten and a full-time social service center and on-site guidance counselors at an elementary school. After the 1970s Victoria

Foundation began to fund multi-purpose youth agencies and neighborhood-based organizations that supported after-school programs, job-training initiatives, and youth development programs.

Under the direction of Executive Officer, Catherine M. McFarland, the Foundation has recognized the importance of providing general operating support to Newark's community organizations and has played a crucial role in enabling these groups to maintain their important services to the people of the City.

We congratulate Victoria Foundation for its extraordinary achievements and wish it many more years of outstanding service to New Jersey nonprofits and the people of Newark and New Jersey.

.....



Jefferson Aguilar a Newark fourth-grader, drops pennies in a plastic cup in an experiment about water surface tension. The Oliver Street School student participated in the Conservancy's Make a Splash with project WET. (Patti Sapone/The Star-Ledger)

Oraton Street Residents Continue Their Struggle to Save Community Garden

For the second consecutive year, the residents of the Oraton Street block in Newark's North Ward staved off development pressure and temporarily preserved their vibrant community garden. City officials allowed the garden to be included in their Adopt-A-Lot program which permits residents to lease City-owned property for the purpose of vegetable and flower gardens. The future of the garden is still in jeopardy due to current development plans to build two-family houses on the site.

The community garden was established by the Conservancy and the Oraton Street Block Association in 1998, and has greatly improved the neighborhood. Much of the funding for the garden came from the City of Newark, through its Law Enforcement Block Grant. In addition to City support, the community garden has support from two area nonprofits, La Casa de Don Pedro and the St. James Community Development Corporation.

Hundreds of hours of sweat equity were poured into the garden's creation. This effort culminated in a Grand Opening celebration on August 1, 1998 that was well attended by City officials and community members. The garden also received accolades in the summer of 1998 as a winner in the Conservancy's annual City Gardens Contest, in the category of Best Community Vegetable Garden. However, residents still have to fight tooth and nail to keep their community

space from being leveled by bulldozers in an effort to "improve" Newark's neighborhoods.

Currently, the City does not allow for the adoption of lots in the North and South Wards because development potential is greater in these wards and developers do not want to wait for Adopt-A-Lot leases to expire.

To counter the City's reluctance to allow the garden to be readopted, Oraton Street residents fought back with letters to City officials detailing their frustration with the prospect of losing their community space. The Conservancy also wrote letters to several City officials in support of the residents' claims for preserving the garden. The letter-writing campaign was just the start. The City did not respond to the community's concerns, so Oraton Street residents convinced *The Star Ledger* to write an article detailing their plight. The April 27, 2000 article must have gotten the City's attention, because within the next few weeks City officials decided to allow residents to continue their work in the community garden until the end of 2000. This victory is significant because this garden is the only lot in the North or South wards that has



Reverend Dunnell showing off his impressive garden.

been given a waiver to lease City-owned property through the Adopt-A-Lot program.

The irony is that there are dozens of vacant lots that are in close proximity to the garden that would be more appropriate candidates for housing. Furthermore, the community has banded together to turn a vacant, crime-ridden lot into an award-winning community garden. Over the past three years, the Oraton Street Community Garden itself has been a focal point in the revitalization of the neighborhood. The City believes that revitalizing Newark means building. The Conservancy, on the other hand, believes that setting aside some community open space for a garden or park contributes just as significantly to the revitalization of Newark's neighborhoods as the construction of housing.

The Conservancy supports the City's overall revitalization efforts, but we urge the City and area developers

to think of community gardens as productive space. We also challenge the City of Newark to involve local citizens in neighborhood planning efforts. Who better to decide what a community looks like than the residents?

The Conservancy encourages residents and community groups to become empowered to take on the big issues in their neighborhoods. Hopefully other neighborhood groups in Newark will follow Oraton Street's footsteps and demand improvements in their neighborhoods, including the preservation of



Residents from Cypress Street, first place winners in the Best Block category of the Conservancy's City Gardens Contest 2000.

community open space. For more information on community gardens in Newark, please contact the Conservancy's Community Greening Coordinator, Steve Wiessner at (973) 642-4646.

The Conservancy is looking forward to creating a community-based gardening organization that will address the plight of residents who are fighting to improve their neighborhoods through gardening and beautification efforts. If you are interested in joining such an organization, call Steve at the above number to get further details.



What's in a name: Dandelion

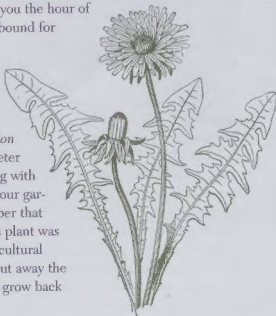
While you are bent at the waist, cultivator in hand trying doggedly to remove this plant from your lawn, it may give you some comfort to recite this poem as a kind of mantra:

*"Dear common flower
that grow'st beside the way
fringing the dusty road with harmless gold
first pledge of blithsome May
You are a pleasure to behold."*

Apparently James Russell Lowell was an admirer of the disturbed soil plant, commonly known as the DANDELION. The word dandelion is an anglicization of the original French name *dente de lion*, the lion's tooth. So named for the leaf's jagged edge, the dandelion came to America from Europe. Over centuries and throughout the world, gardeners have adopted the "If you can't beat em, Eat em" philosophy towards the tasty dandelion. Young leaves are delicious in salads or boiled and served like spinach. The young roots too can be peeled and boiled as a vegetable.

In a comparison of leafy green vegetables, dandelions topped broccoli, spinach and mustard greens in nutritional value! The dandelion's medicinal value has been demonstrated throughout history. The Chinese consider Huang-hua-ti-ting (yellow flowered earth nails) one of the six most important plants in their herbal medicine chest.

Much folklore surrounds the dandelion as well. To dream about dandelions is bad luck. To tell the time, blow on the seed head twice and however many seeds remain give you the hour of the day. Recipes abound for dandelion wine, jelly, omelets and doughnuts. For some great cooking ideas, read *"The Dandelion Celebration"* by Peter Gail. When dealing with the dandelion in your garden try to remember that 100 years ago, this plant was exhibited at Horticultural Shows. So relax, put away the spray...they'll only grow back twice as strong!



Lucent Technologies Foundation Interns Learn and Teach @Library.com

Through the Newark Youth Leadership Project (NYLP), supported by the Lucent Technologies Foundation, five Newark students joined Conservancy Education staff last summer. Working alongside staff as interns, one college and four high school students have been learning about "public education."

Along with Conservancy staff, interns presented environmental education programs to children at branch libraries throughout the city. "Connect @Library.READ" is a collaboration of the Conservancy and the

Newark Public Library. The 1½ hour-long programs focus on ecosystems. Interns read stories, perform experiments, lead craft activities and take children on a computer "virtual tour." NYLP Interns have participated fully in these programs—researching, typing, cutting and pasting! Hundreds of Newark children enjoyed these programs and we look forward to future partnerships with Newark Public Libraries. The Education Staff is grateful to the Lucent Technologies Foundation for its support of the Newark Youth Leadership Project!



The Newark Youth Leadership Project (NYLP), funded by the Lucent Technologies Foundation, was designed to give Newark High School students exposure to job training, career awareness, communication and computer literacy skills. During a seven week summer session, 35-40 students are mentored, in small groups, by college students and work in the Conservancy's Education, Greening, Horticultural, Art and Office job sites. Selected based on grade point average and school recommendation, each student has the opportunity to apply for year-round participation in the program.

My Thoughts About the Conservancy

Michelle F. Thomas
NYLP Greening College Mentor
Seton Hall University

Within my first workweek at Greater Newark Conservancy, I had many interesting experiences working with the staff, students and interns. Nevertheless, despite what I said in the preliminary interview, after I started thinking about what the task at hand really entailed, I did not think that I was going to be able to do well in a job like this (mentoring High School students). Maybe it was because I never thought that I could be a mentor to someone so close to my own age. Or maybe it's because I don't even really see myself as a mentor. At the most, I see myself as a good listener and a better-than-okay person to hang out with, but never a mentor. Not to mention the fact that I was a

little anxious, after I found out that I was going to be the only one mentoring the Greening interns.

However, despite these thoughts that I have had about myself, concerning this job, I have learned to look past them, step up to the challenge and see myself as others see me. I have learned that the best mentors are usually your friends, and your friends are usually close to your age. Now, although I may not be able to successfully form "friendships" with all of the students involved in this program, I am learning more and more that I can be successful at this job. And most importantly, the task of one can always be divided between others.

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Education Field Trips

Greater Newark Conservancy's education staff is pleased to report that our field trip program in collaboration with the Reeves-Reed Arboretum in Summit has begun its fourth year. The goal of the Spring 2000 Hands-to-Nature program, "The Dandelion Project," was to establish a connection between the plants of the inner city and those of a suburban botanical garden. This activity-based program engages the Newark schoolchildren in a myriad of hands-on experiences designed to teach the history and value of plants commonly known as "weeds." This Spring over 240 Newark schoolchildren, their parents and teachers will share in this marvelous opportunity.

Field trip participants are treated to transportation to and from the Arboretum and a pizza lunch courtesy of the following generous sponsors: Summit Junior Fortnightly Club, the Flying Horse Foundation, Wilbur Nelson of Summit, Prudential, Brown and Fowler, the Summit Garden Club, PSE&G and the Madison Garden Club. We are also greatly

indebted to the Wild Oats Market, Inc. for their generous donation of gourmet cookies and juice for our lunches.

As we zoom along the highway toward the Reeves-Reed Arboretum, the students' oh's and ah's fill the bus. For many of these children this trip is their first venture outside the bounds of Newark. Their excitement increases as we enter the Arboretum gates. This sense of wonder continues long after returning home. The students come away from the program with a deep appreciation of nature and a clear understanding that nature is everywhere, even in the City of Newark. The sidewalk tree is no longer just a tree. In the minds of these students the tree is now a habitat for birds, squirrels and insects. The chicory plant blooming in the local vacant lot is no longer a weed, instead it has been transformed into a wonderful blue wildflower. These field trips are vitally important to the students of Newark as a vehicle for raising their environmental awareness and instilling a respect for the Earth.



Mia Song/The Star-Ledger

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There's a revival going on in downtown Newark. It's something remarkable. Like the place you once knew is being re-born. And the Plant A Tree Partnership, a cooperative effort between Jewish National Fund and the Greater Newark Conservancy, in conjunction with the Community Relations Committee of the United Jewish Federation of MetroWest, is making an important contribution to this revival. It's also a terrific opportunity to contribute directly to the growth and success of both Newark, New Jersey and Israel.



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rough Newark

Location." These projects, with the projects from Camden and Hudson, were presented at the annual "Air Congress" held at the University School of Law in Newark.

we have made the project easier. A generous grant from the Thore Foundation of Newark made it possible for the city to purchase a second air quality monitor, include field trip activities, develop a "health check" mentoring program and more!

so working with the University Consortium for Environmental Justice (UCEJ) and Cornell University to develop community maps using GIS



technology. The USEPA Region 2 has also extended its original grant to include webpage design for each participating city. The Second Annual Air Congress will be held in late April 2001 in Newark.

Visit the Air CURRENTS website www.aircurrents.org for updates and information about the project and the agencies involved.

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- A single \$36 donation plants one tree right here at home, in Newark, and another in our people's homeland, Israel.
- Trees planted in Newark will form a greenbelt around the city, while those planted in Jerusalem will grow in New Jersey Park.
- For other opportunities, please call the New Jersey Region of Jewish National Fund at (973) 564-9030.

So be a part of something so special it's impact will be felt on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Air CURRENTS Blows through Newark

Since August 1999, Greater Newark Conservancy has been involved in North East States for Coordination Air Use Management's Air CURRENTS Project. Using a portable air quality monitoring system developed by PAX Analytics of Boston, MA, high school students and teachers can easily collect, analyze, and report air quality data to the greater community.

During the 1999-2000 school year the project was coordinated in Camden, Newark, and Brooklyn. In Newark, the Conservancy worked with three high schools to complete projects including "Newark versus Blairstown - An Air Quality Comparison," "Air Quality in and around West Side High," and "A Comparison of Particulate Matter in an Urban and

Suburban Location." These projects, along with the projects from Camden and Brooklyn, were presented at the First Annual "Air Congress" held at Seton Hall University School of Law in Newark.

This year we have made the project even better. A generous grant from The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey has made it possible for the Conservancy to purchase a second air quality monitor, include field trip opportunities, develop a "health awareness" mentoring program and so much more!

We are also working with the Community University Consortium for Regional Environmental Justice (CUCREJ) and Cornell University to create community maps using GIS



technology. The USEPA Region 2 has also extended its original grant to include webpage design for each participating city. The Second Annual Air Congress will be held in late April 2001 in Newark.

Visit the Air CURRENTS website www.aircurrents.org for updates and information about the project and the agencies involved.

ONE DONATION. TWO COMMUNITIES. A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE.

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Living Lab Update

The Conservancy has created and currently maintains 11 Living laboratory "outdoor classroom" gardens at Newark Schools.

Burnet St. School's Living Lab is currently in its final stages of completion. The Conservancy erected a fence to secure the property and students are maintaining weekly litter cleaning efforts. Last spring, four classes participated in the Conservancy's "Name The Garden Contest" to promote awareness of and participation in the newly constructed garden. The winner, Mariano Torres, chose "Garden of Wonders" as the new name and theme for the garden space. To enhance the theme the Conservancy is designing a scenic mural along the back wall, colorful paintings on the raised beds, a garden poem along the front wall, and a painted display of garden animals and insects.

McKinley School has chosen a Native American theme for its garden this year. Each class has participated in numerous activities and research regarding the culture and life of the Lenape Indians in New Jersey. Their garden will supplement these lessons through the planting and harvesting of Native plants. The Conservancy has worked with all the Kindergarten and first grade classes to build two bamboo teepees and plant pole beans to climb the teepees. Students have also planted potatoes, corn, and squash within the raised beds.

Miller St. School's previous garden site for over 10 years has been reclaimed by the City of Newark for use as a parking lot. The school has since been given another site for its

garden. The Conservancy has been working with the city and the school to clear, topsoil, and fence the new garden site. Trees and plant materials which could be salvaged from the previous site were replanted in the new garden. This past spring, the entire school took part in the Conservancy's "Name the Garden Contest" with the chosen name being, "Bloom Town."

The Conservancy demonstrates that even small sites at Newark Schools can be beautiful. Boylan St. School is one of the Conservancy's many school beautification sites. This school is fortunate to have planting space on the grounds and also have a summer program. The Conservancy has been working with this special education

school to plant an herb garden and a perennial bed along the front of the school. The Kindergarten classes will be working over the summer with the Conservancy staff to discover the wonders of herbs.

East Side High School has recently become an active school beautification site. The original owner of the school's side courtyard space planted a large row of rose bushes that beautified the school block. Thirty years later, only one of the original rose bushes remains. The Conservancy has spent this past year cleaning and replanting a variety of roses and perennials throughout the area, as well as creating a large rose art mural along the wall bordering the courtyard.



Elliot Street School students learn about owls through a Raptor Trust presentation. The program was sponsored through the partnership of the Conservancy and the Garden Club of the Oranges



Newark Schoolchildren Work to Save the Monarch Butterfly

How can a bowl of mud and a few seeds save the Monarch Butterfly? Over 2,500 Newark schoolchildren learned how by making seedballs. Seedballs are 1 1/2 inch-diameter balls of powdered clay, humus and seed. By using seeds from plants that sustain the Monarch Butterfly throughout its life cycle, children make seedballs for use at Monarch Meadow, the Conservancy's habitat restoration project in Branch Brook Park.

Last year's Earth Day in the Classroom program, The Monarch Project, explored the anatomy, life cycle and role of the Monarch in New Jersey's ecosystem. The Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) makes the longest migration in insect history. Traveling from points as far north as Canada to locales as far south as Mexico, tagged Monarchs have been found to make this trip in one generation! The Monarch project will travel to groups of 75+ children. If you have a scout, church or civic group that's looking for an interactive environmental program, call the Conservancy's Education Department and ask about bringing the Monarch project to your community.

PRUDENTIAL Shows it really CARES! \$750,000 Grant names Outdoor Learning Center

Conservancy Campaign Raises \$1.5 Million in the last six months.

Last September Prudential Foundation provided a major boost to the Conservancy's Campaign to create the new Urban Environmental and Ecological Center with a \$750,000 grant from the Company's 125th Anniversary Fund. Selected from over 200 requests, the Conservancy's successful application is among the top nine of 45 grants, totaling \$20 million, which the company awarded to Newark nonprofits. Celebrating its founding in Newark 125 years ago, Prudential created its Anniversary Fund to pump monies into its home city's renaissance. These one-time grants are also intended to leverage other funding for Newark's nonprofits. At Prudential's request, the \$750,000 grant will name the Prudential Outdoor Learning Center at the Conservancy's new Urban Environmental and Ecological Center.

The 1.5-acre grounds of the Outdoor facility will consist of a series of thematic garden "classrooms" in which students and teachers will experience cross curriculum learning by studying biodiversity, animal and plant habitat and lifecycles in the garden. "We are thrilled about the Prudential grant," says Robin Dougherty, Executive Director of the Conservancy, "and extremely grateful for the vote of confidence in our program and the new Center, and for bestowing the Prudential name on the Outdoor Learning Center."

The impact of Prudential's grant, and the determined efforts of the Conservancy's Campaign Committee, are demonstrated in the unprecedented \$1.5 million growth in Campaign funds raised over the past six months! Major recent grants, in addition to

the Prudential grant, have included \$100,000 from The Prospect Hill Foundation, \$100,000 from American Home Products Corporation, \$50,000 from Independence Community Foundation, \$250,000 from an anonymous donor whose gift is in honor of Ray and Patti Chambers, \$75,000 from The New York Community Trust — Wallace Reader's Digest Special Projects Fund, \$100,000 from Victoria Foundation, and \$30,000 from The Hyde and Watson Foundation. The recent influx of funding has brought the Conservancy to nearly \$4.7 million toward its Campaign goal of \$6.4 million. The growing success of the Campaign means that construction of the new Center will soon be underway!



Donations Received

July 2000 through December 2000

\$75,000+

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
The New York Community Trust-Wallace
Reader's Digest Special Projects Fund



\$25,000-74,999

Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey
The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation
Lucent Technologies Foundation
Prospect Hill Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Shipley



\$5000-24,999

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\$1000-4,999

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\$100-249

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the donor list. If any omissions are found, please contact Greater Newark Conservancy's Development Office at (973)642-4646 ext. 16.

Conservancy Given Professional Development Certification Go Ahead

Teacher training has been a Conservancy priority for the past decade. Last year, 381 teachers attended Conservancy workshops. Greater Newark Conservancy is certified by the State of New Jersey as a Professional Development Provider (#833.) Because of our long history of providing teacher training we have received a class one standing, the top rating for providers.

New Jersey teachers are required to complete 100 hours of Professional Development every five years. This year the Conservancy's selection of innovative and urban-sensitive workshops include Project Wet, Project Wild and Project Aquatic Wild. We are also working with two new partners in professional development, the New Jersey Audubon Society and the USDA Food Stamp Education Nutrition Program. Visit ECO News, the Conservancy's Education publication at www.citybloom.org to learn more about upcoming professional development opportunities.

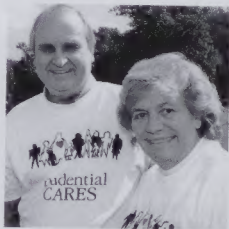
Look for us on the DOE website:
www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev/providers/index.html.

Prudential Global Volunteer Day 2000

Last October Greater Newark Conservancy was selected by The Prudential Insurance Company of America to be a partner in the company's Global Volunteer Day 2000, which enables employees and their families to participate in worthwhile volunteer efforts. This year's event focused on the Conservancy's Monarch Meadow in Newark's Branch Brook Park. A collaboration between the Conservancy and the Essex County Department of Parks and Cultural Affairs, Monarch Meadow is a four-acre site where the Conservancy is establishing suitable habitat for the Monarch butterflies to rest and feed

during their annual migration to Mexico. Prudential Chairman and CEO Art Ryan and his wife Pat (pictured) joined Conservancy staff and 100 Prudential employees and their families to trim trees, remove invasive plants and plant hundreds of "butterfly friendly" species in the Meadow. Conservancy Education Stations provided butterfly-related activities for families throughout the day. Monarch Meadow is an example of nonprofit, corporate and government agencies working together to develop urban open space for people and wildlife. We are extremely grateful to Prudential for its recognition of our work, generous financial

support, and enthusiasm and energy in helping create a home for the Monarch butterflies and a better park for Newark!



Art and Pat Ryan at Monarch Meadow



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